SIGNA COELI.

The Signs of Heaven:

OR

A SERMON

On a TEXT in the Tenth Chapter of the Prophecy of the Prophet

JEREMIAH,

at the Second Verse.

Preached on the day before that great Eclipse of the Sun, which was on the Nine and twentieth day of *March*, in this Year of our LORD GOD, 1652. And Year of the World, 5656.

By *John Swan*, Minister of Gods Word.

Pauci intelligunt, multi reprehendunt.

Non ait Jeremias, *Nihil esse Signa Cæli, imò cum nominat Signa, portendi aliquid adfirmat.* Melanct. Præfat. in Joh. Schoneri Libros.

London, Printed for *John Williams*, dwelling at the Sign of the *Crown* in *Paul's* Church-yard. 1652.

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Cum Licentia Domini Regis.

Nec est Regnum, Nec Ipse Signum Cœli, Nec Nomen Signi, Nec Ipsi aliquid adjuvat. Melanch. Prælat. in Joh. Sconeri Libros.

Printed by John Sewin, dwelling at the Sign of the Angel, Church-yard, 1652.

JEREMIAH 10. 2.

Thus ſaith the Lord, Learn not the way of the Heathen, and be not diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven; for the Heathen are diſmayed at them.

THat which hath cauſed me to make choice of this Text at this time, is the great noiſe which I have heard among the common people concerning that Eclipſe of the Sun, which to morrow in the Forenoon will preſent it ſelf unto us. It is indeed an Eclipſe that will be very great, and may therefore have ſome ſad effects, which will in time ſhew themſelves among us: Yet ſhould not this ſo trouble, perplex, or caſt down the mindes of Chriſtians, as if they had no God to ſtay upon. For what is it, but the way of the Heathen to be afraid of the Signs of Heaven; which way we muſt not learn: For *thus ſaith the Lord, Learn not the way of the Heathen, and be not diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven; for the Heathen are diſmayed at them.*

I have read the words according as I finde them rendred in our laſt Tranſlation, agreeing therein to the Original, and to others who have repeated it in another Tongue. *Melanthon* ſaith, *Nolite timere à ſignis Cœli, quæ timent Gentes. Be not afraid of the Signs of Heaven, which the Gentiles* (or the Heathen) *fear.* And *Junius* or *Tremelius*, thus; *A Signis Cœlorum ne conſternemini, quia conſternantur Gentes ab illis:* That is, *Be not aſtoniſhed or ſore troubled in minde at the Signs of*

Heaven, for the Heathen are amazed at them: As if he ſhould ſay, The thought of what the Signs may ſignifie, hath taken away their heart, hath caſt them down, aſtoniſhed them, made them afraid, amazed, and ſore troubled in minde. But be not ſo, You that have the Lord for your God; For *thus ſaith the Lord, Learn not the way of the Heathen, and be not diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven; for the Heathen are diſmayed at them.*

In which Text I finde a Prohibition, wherein the people of God are prohibited from learning the way of the Heathen: One particular whereof is this, namely, That they feared or were diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven; beſide which, they had other ways wherein they offended, as I ſhall afterward ſhew you.

Some I know by the word *fear* in this place, underſtand a Religious reverence or fear, ſuch as is pertinent to Divine Worſhip; and thereupon they do not read the Text, *Be not afraid of the Signs of Heaven*; but, *Fear not the Signs of Heaven:* In which reading, the ſence or meaning is very different. For by ſaying, *Fear not the Signs of Heaven*, they conclude that the Prohibition in the ſimple meaning thereof, is no more then *worſhip not*; it being here the intent of the *Prophet* to keep back the *Jews* from worſhipping the *Heavenly Bodies*; called in the Text by the name of the *Signs of Heaven*. For that the word *fear* is often taken ſo in Scripture cannot be denied. As for example, in the Nine and twentieth Chapter of *Iſaiah*, at the thirteenth Verſe, we have theſe words, *And their fear toward me was taught by the precept of men:* Which words when our Saviour Chriſt expounded, in *Matth.* 15. 9. he took the word *fear* for *worſhip*; ſaying, *In vain they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines mens Traditions.* So

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alſo in another place when the Children of *Iſrael* had ſinned, it is ſaid, *They feared other gods*; as is written in the Second Book of the *Kings*, the Seventeenth Chapter at the ſeventh Verſe: *They feared other gods*; that is, *They worſhipped other gods*. And in more particular, that it muſt be taken ſo here in this place, the words following at the Fifth Verſe do make more evident; for there the Prophet ſpeaking of the *Images* of the Heathen, which they made, erected, and worſhipped, ſaith thus; *Fear them not, for they ſtand up as the Palm-tree, but they ſpeak not*, &c. By all which, a man would think that ſuch indeed were the ſignification of the word *fear* in this very place, and that it were needleſs to ſeek any other interpretation thereof. But I ſhall ſhew the contrary, and evidently declare that it is not ſo.

For firſt in juſtification of that reading which renders the Text, *Be not afraid of the Signs of Heaven*; or *Be not diſmayed at them*; It is a reading which is exactly ſuitable to the *Hebrew* word here uſed, which doth certainly ſignifie a paſſive ſurpriſal or poſſeſſion with fear, and not an active, as doth that aforeſaid in *Iſai.* 29. 13. And can therefore in it ſelf import nothing that is pertinent to ſuch a fear as ſimply hath relation to Adoration: For though both the *Heathen* and *Jews* alſo were guilty of worſhipping the Hoſt of Heaven, for which they are elſewhere reproved, as I ſhall ſhew you by and by; yet the word here uſed, imployes no ſuch thing, nor is ever ſo to be taken, except (as ſome think) the object of *fear*, when it is named, be either put for the true God, or for ſome Idol to be worſhiped in the ſtead of God.

Then Secondly, For that alſo at the Fifth Verſe of this

this Chapter before mentioned, where idolatrous fear of worſhip of Images is forbidden; the phraſe is not the ſame, for the phraſe is altered; and is there no paſſive ſurpriſal or poſſeſſion with fear of aſtoniſhment, as in the former word at the ſecond Verſe; but is there an active fear, ſuch as is pertinent to adoration, as the word there uſed hath declared. The word therefore not being the ſame in both places, cauſeth the ſence and meaning not to be the ſame in one place, that it is in the other; but that the one differeth from the other, even as far as doing is from ſuffering.

Howbeit, I neither can nor will deny, but that paſſive fear drives ſuperſtitious men many times to that active fear of adoration: For though it be certainly true, That God Almighty made the Sun, Moon, and other Stars, yet ſuch is the folly of ſome among men, to make them gods; which they do by their vain wicked practiſes of worſhipping of them: And ſo the greateſt Lights are by them abuſed to the greateſt darkneſs; and by deifying of them, they damnifie themſelves by being as blinde, and as ſuperſtitiouſly addicted as were the *Heathen Gentiles*. This the *Jews* (even in this Prophets time, as alſo in ſome times before) were guilty of, which they defended with ſuch obſtinacy, That when they were reproved of him, and taught to do otherwiſe, they anſwered, That they would not do according to his Teaching, but follow rather the deſperate bent of their own Bows, as I may ſay, In worſhipping the Moon as Queen of Heaven. This you may ſee in the Four and fortieth of *Jeremy*, at the Sixteenth and ſeventeenth Verſes, where the words be theſe; *As for the word that thou haſt*

hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not (say they) *hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our mouth, to burn incense to the* Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our Fathers, our Kings and our Princes, in the Cities of* Judah, *and in the streets of* Jerusalem. Of which they give this Reason; *For then* (say they) *we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.* By which last words [*plenty of victuals, were well, and saw no evil*] it well appeareth, That it was fear, as much as any thing else, which made them thus advance this practise. And truly fear is an effect proceeding from the nature of Superstition, and so far prevailing, That it will there make gods, where it doubteth most of danger; As the *Egyptians* did, in making *Fortune* a godess; for they kept an annual feast in honor of her diety, giving her thanks for the year which was past, and earnestly imploring her favor for the year to come. It was *Plutarchs* observation, That the Superstitious always think the gods ready to do hurt: By means whereof, he accounteth them in worse case then Malefactors or Fugitives; who if they once recover the Altar, are there secured from fear, where nevertheless the Superstitious are in greatest thraldom: And from hence arose that ancient saying, *Primos in orbe deos fecit timor: Fear first brought gods into the world.* And hence it also was, That the Heathen in institution of their Sacrifices, did offer as well to all their gods, that they should not hurt them, as for any help they expected from them. And so in some sort it is even among us, though called Christians; for we have some that are troubled, if the Salt do but fall towards them; others that be afraid

* The Moon, as in *Job*, Chap. 31. 26.

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if a Raven do but crook over them; or an Hare but croſs the way before them; or a Pin but lie with the point towards them, for then forſooth they think the gods are angry with them, they dare not therefore ſo much as ſtoop to take it up; forgetting in the mean while what *David* ſaith in the 31 *Pſalm*, at the ſixth or ſeventh Verſe; namely this, *I hate all thoſe* (ſaith he) *who hold of ſuperſtitious* (or lying) *vanities; but my truſt hath been in the Lord.* O, what a miſery it is to dote, as ſome men do, through the godleſs fear of fooliſh fancies: But above all we have an example of the poor ſilly *Indians*, who ſacrifice their children unto the Devil at this very day, becauſe they be mainly afraid of him. And of old (as it is ſtoried) we have the example of *Alexander Magnus*, who ſacrificed to the Sun, Moon, and Earth, that thereby he might divert the evil which (as he feared) was portended by an Eclipſe but a little before. And the *Jews* forementioned, did not onely burn incenſe to the Moon, whom they called the Queen of Heaven, but did offer up cakes unto her alſo, as in *Jere.*7.18. From which kinde of Idolatry *Job* did thus acquit himſelf, ſaying, *If I have beheld the Sun when it ſhined, or the Moon when it walked in brightneſs; or if my heart hath ſecretly enticed my mouth to kiſs my hand unto it, or by way of worſhipping it; then this were iniquity that ought to be puniſhed*, Job 31. 26. A ſmatch of which is ſtill remaining, even among us in ſome old doting Women, who at the firſt ſight of the New Moon do uſe to ſay, *Yonder's the Moon, God ſave her grace.* For from whence ſhould that Speech ariſe, but from the reliques of that Heatheniſh kinde of Idolatry which made gods of the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars: But when *Job* ſpake againſt it, he ſaid, *It*

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was iniquity that ought to be puniſhed; as you have already heard. And well might *Job* ſay ſo, becauſe God Almighty had forbidden it; as in *Deut.*4. 19. *Beware leſt thou lift up thine eyes to Heaven; and when thou ſeeſt the Sun, and the Moon, and the Stars, even all the hoſt of Heaven, ſhouldſt be driven to worſhip and ſerve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all Nations under the whole Heaven.*

By all, or moſt of which (hitherto mentioned) we ſee, that God Almighty would not have his people learn the way of the Heathen, either in a ſervile ſlaviſh fear actively conſidered, whereby they worſhip the Sun, Moon, and Stars; or in a paſſive fear (as in the Text) whereby they are made afraid, amazed, or ſore troubled in minde with thought of what may happen from the ſignifications of the ſigns of Heaven; For though they be ſigns, and thereupon may and do ſignifie, elſe they were no ſigns; yet *thus ſaith the Lord, Be not afraid of them, for the Heathen are diſmayed at them.* All which, in a word, tendeth to this, namely, That the Prophet here teacheth Gods people to have their truſt ſo firmly fixed on him, that what diſaſter ſoever the Heavens in the courſe of Nature ſhould at any time threaten unto them, they ought not to fear it. For as one truly ſpeaketh, *Aſtra regunt homines, ſed Deus aſtra regit:* The Stars have a power over men, ſuch as it is; but God ruleth the Stars: Or as another ſaith,

Juſtè age—— Sapiens dominabitur aſtris;
Et manibus ſummi ſtant Elementa Dei.

That is,

Do godly deeds, ſo ſhalt thou rule the Stars;
For then God holds the Elements from Wars.

Whereto agreeth that of *Melanchthon*, a great and famous Divine, who ſpeaking of this of *Jeremy*, *Be not afraid of the ſigns of Heaven*; ſaith, *Oh ſweet conſolation propoſed to the Church of God, and to all that call upon him.* For though the Prophet doth not ſay, They ſignifie nothing; nay, rather in naming them ſigns, doth declare they ſometimes ſignifie or threaten great and ſad things; yet he would have the godly comforted, and not be diſmayed at them. *Not* (ſaith he) *becauſe they ſignifie nothing, but that the pious may truſt that they ſhall be covered and kept of God even in thoſe dangers.* For as Chriſt when he biddeth us not to fear death, doth it, not becauſe death is not bitter, but becauſe he would have us know, that even in death he is preſent to preſerve us: So here the Lord God, in ſaying, *Fear not the ſigns of Heaven*, doth it, not becauſe they are not ſometimes of an evil ſignification, and may therefore produce effects of a ſad event, but becauſe he would have our whole truſt and confidence be placed in him, who hath made the Heavens and the Earth with all that therein is. The Heathens indeed were afraid, becauſe they looked onely upon the ſecondary cauſes, but you that be Gods children may look upon God the firſt cauſe; and therefore though they were, yet you need not be afraid of the ſigns of Heaven; no, though they promiſe no good: For God is above them, and can either mitigate the moſt direful influence that is, as he ſtayed the courſe of the Sun in the days of *Joſhua*; or elſe can make even that which is the worſt of all to work for the good of them that love and fear him, as you may ſee in *Rom.* 8. 28. in which place the Apoſtle ſpeaks without limitation of any thing, ſaying, *All things*: And if all things, then

then even the worſt of ſuch things alſo as may be intended by the ſignification of theſe ſigns. *He that dwelleth* (ſaith *David*) *in the ſecret place of the moſt high,* Pſal.91.1. *ſhall abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty.* Thus he in one *Pſalm*, and in another, *Be merciful unto me, O God,* Pſal.57.1. *be merciful unto me, for my ſoul truſteth in thee; yea, in the ſhadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until theſe calamities be overpaſt.* In which words *David* (a man after Gods own heart) teacheth us by his own example, where to ſhelter our ſelves in troubleſome times, even under the ſhadow of Gods wings. And then, come life, come death, or come what will or can come, it ſhall be no terror to him that makes God his refuge. For though in this infirmity of nature mans minde is ſubject to fear as well as to any other paſſion, and may therefore at the firſt be troubled when the Signs of Heaven, do threaten the Earth with ſome direful influence, yet when he hears the ſacred voice of the Eternal ſay, *Be not diſmayed at them*; he gives ear thereunto, betakes him to God, prayes for Faith, endeavors for patience, and all other Graces which may confirm him: And ſo having put himſelf under Gods protection, he reſteth ſetled and quiet in minde, waiting and expecting to ſee what it is that the Lord will do: For though in it ſelf it be a ſad thing to ſee how the Peſtilence ſometimes rageth and ſweeps away the people, to ſee how Famine and the Sword devours, to ſee the firing and ſubverſions of Cities, to behold the death of Friends and Kinsfolks, the baniſhment of our ſelves, our Wives and Children; yet ought the godly to be ſo confirmed, That through the fear of theſe things they may not be broken, but be firmly ſetled, and willing to walk with God in all

his ways, as well of judgement as of mercy; which again was *Davids* course in the Three and twentieth *Psalm* at the fourth Verse. *For though I walk* (saith he) *through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil; For thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.* And in the Six and fortieth *Psalm* at the first and second Verses, *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; Therefore will we not fear, though the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the Heart* (or midst) *of the Sea. Erigenda igitur mens est, &c.* The minde therefore of a godly man ought to be elevated above all this corporal nature, though the World should be broken and fall; nor is it to be endured that the Word of God, nor that our trust toward him should be shaken off: By which trust as the mindes of the godly are guarded against present dangers, so should they also be strengthned against the hurtful significations of the Stars, as saith *Melanchthon.*

In a word, It is certainly true that the time will one day come, when the whole World it self shall go to ruine; before which time there shall be signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars; and Mens Hearts shall fail them for fear, as our Saviour hath told us, in *Luke* the One and twentieth, *Yet for all this* (saith Christ there) *when these things shall begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.* By which phrase of lifting up the head, is still declared, That the right reading and meaning of the Text is so as at the first I shewed; namely, Be not afraid, cast down, sore troubled in minde, or as those who hang the head at the Signs of Heaven, what sad thing soever seems to be threatned by them; for it is God

God that guides * *Arcturus* and his sons, and can (if he please) as well restrain the bad influences of any of the wandring Planets, as binde up the sweet influences of the fixed *Pleiades*, or loose the Bands of *Orion*; how else had the Lord convinced *Job* of weakness and imbecility concern ng these very things, in *Job* 38. 31. Moreover, there is a Text in *Job* 9.7. where God is said to seal up the Stars in his anger: This he doth for a punishment, when he keeps back the Rain from watering the Earth, as in the days of *Ahab*, when there was no Rain for the space of three years together. From whence again I argue, That as he can seal them up from doing good, for a punishment to offenders; so in like maner he can seal or binde them up in his mercy from being hurtful, though they may threaten great and sad things to this wicked world, in which we live: Or thirdly, be it granted, That as the case may stand between him and the World, he will not absolutely hinder (or perhaps, not at all hinder) the full and compleat operation of the Signs of Heaven, but let them go on unbound, as the Stars in their courses, to fight against *Sisera*; that is, to use them as his Instruments for punishing an incorrigable sinful people; Yet for all that, working all things not barely according to his will, but according to the counsel of his will, there is no doubt but he will dispose of all things as well in a merciful way to those that fear him, as in a just way to those who obstinately sin against him; and cause even the worst of things to co-operate or work together for the good of his children: To whom by these sad Signs of Heaven (which beget a fainting fear in others) he gives warning of his judgements, and thereupon

* A Star so called in *Job* 38. 32.

Ephes. 1. 11.

Rom. 8. 28.

thereupon prepareth and ſtirreth them up to call upon him. For (as one truly ſaith) *Loquitur cum hominibus Deus, non modo lingua humanâ, per Prophetas, Apoſtolos, & Paſtores; ſed non-nunquam etiam ipſiis Elementis in formas & imagines diverſas compoſitis:* That is, *God* (ſaith he) *ſpeaketh with men, not onely with the Tongues of men, by Prophets, Apoſtles, and Teachers; but ſometimes alſo by the very Elements, compoſed or wrought into divers forms and ſhapes.* And if by the Elements, then by the Stars and Lights of Heaven, which work not onely upon the Elements, but upon all things elſe that are made thereof: For that they work upon the inferior World, is an Axiome ſo firmly grounded upon experience, that all the World will never be able to confute it. *Ariſtotle* therefore (in the opinion of *Melanchthon*) ſpoke the truth when he ſaid, *That this inferior World is governed of the ſuperior, and that the ſuperior Bodies are the cauſe of motion in the inferior.* Theſe virtues or powers by which they work, were at the firſt divinely ſtamped in them, and are called in *Job* 38. 31. by the name of influences; the *Greek* word is ἐπιῤῥοὰς from ἐπὶ and ῥέω, *Super & fluo*; that is, *To flow into, or upon.* Which derivation employes thus much; namely, That they muſt have ſome Object to flow into, or work upon, it would elſe be non-ſence to uſe that name of influence. Thus then they work. And as they work, ſo by their working they ſpeak even to all thoſe who will but lend an ear to hear them. When therefore *David*, in the Nineteenth *Pſalm*, had ſaid, *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy work*; Then this he alſo added, namely, *That there is neither Speech nor Language, but their voice is heard among them.* Whoſe voice doth

doth he mean there, but the voice of the Heavens, which at the firſt verſe he had ſaid declared the glory of God.

And indeed, in a right conſideration of all this, there is a double ſpeaking to be obſerved; the one for God at the firſt verſe, the Heavens declaring his glory in ſuch a glorious piece of work as they are; the other to men at the third verſe, in regard there is neither Speech nor Language, but their voice is heard among them. All which is true; For though both theſe voices ſtrictly taken, are ſpoken unto men, as well the one as the other, yet the laſt, upon occaſion, may be ſaid to be ſpoken to them in more particular. And thereupon it is, that *Moſes* in the firſt of *Geneſis*, at the fourteenth Verſe, ſpeaking of the Creation of the Heavenly Bodies, ſaith, *God made the Stars for Signs as well as for Seaſons, Days, and Years*; which could not be if they ſignified, foreſhewed, or ſpake nothing by being Signs to us who are here below: For to whom ſhould they be Signs, if not to us who inhabit here in this dull dark Globe of Mortality, over whoſe Heads they hang; that caſting our eyes upon them, we may not onely behold them, but according to that wiſdom which God hath given us, look into their ſignifications by conſidering their Motions, Configurations, Riſings, Settings, Aſpects, Occultations, Eclipſes, Conjunctions, and the like. This we may do, nay rather ſhould do, according to thoſe abilities that God hath given us; Why elſe hath he hanged up thoſe Signs in open view to thoſe that dwell in the face of the Earth? *Os homini ſublime dedit, cœlumque tueri juſſit.* Man looks not downwards, as do the Beaſts that periſh; but God hath given to man a lofty countenance,

countenance, and by that doth as it were command (though not to be afraid, yet) to look up to the Signs of Heaven.

Nor is this offensive unto Piety, or prejudicial to true Religion, more then those other parts of natural knowledge which Christians study as not repugnant to Divinity: For as the other parts of natural knowledge bring no harm at all to Christian Religion; so neither doth this, *Nam hanc quoque partem Physices esse sentimus*, as saith *Melancthon*: For this we also take to be a part of the Physicks, as he affirmeth, not in one, but many places.

I know indeed that the Devil hath been always busie to sow his Tares among the Wheat, and into the * profitable knowledge of the Celestial Influences; hath had an envious endeavor to shuffle in his damned superstitions, poysoning some with his doctrine of Characterical devices, making of Images under such or such a Constellation, and to the knowledge of the secret Vertues of Nature, hath fastned his doctrine of Numbers, Charms, Inchantments, Incantations, and the like: Teaching men to believe in the strength of words and letters, thereby either to equal his own with the All-powerful Word of God, or to diminish the glory of Gods creating Word, by whom are all things; yet should not this scare or terrifie the discerning Christian from searching with sobriety into the works of God: For as *David* saith in the 111 *Psalm*, at the second Verse, *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all those who have pleasure therein.* And as this was *Davids* Doctrine, so was it King *Solomons* practise; For (as the Scripture telleth us, in the First Book of the *Kings*, the Fourth Chapter, at

* So Sir *Walter Rawleigh* calls it in his History of the World.

at the 31. Verſe, and ſo on.) *He was wiſer then all men: Then Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the Sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all Nations round about.* He ſpake of Trees, from the Sedar Tree that is in *Lebanon*, even to the Hyſſop that ſpringeth out of the Wall: he ſpake alſo of Beaſts, and of Fowl, and of creeping things, and of Fiſhes. And there came of all people to hear the wiſdom of *Solomon*, from all Kings of the Earth, which had heard of his wiſdom. Thus there in that Scripture, and in the Book of *Wiſdom* (whoſe title is, *The Wiſdom of Solomon*) at the 17. Verſe of the Seventh Chapter, and ſo on. *I know* (ſaith he) *how the World was made, and the operation of the Elements; the beginning and the end, and the midſt of times; The alterations of the turning of the Sun, and the change of the Seaſons; The circuits of years, and the poſſeſſions of Stars; The natures of living things, and the furiouſneſs of Beaſts; The power of the Winds, and the imaginations of men; The diverſities of Plants, and the virtues of Roots: And all ſuch things as are either ſecret or manifeſt, them I know; for Wiſdom the Worker of all things hath taught me.*

All this *Solomon* knew, God gave him this Wiſdom; which had it been Diabolical and vain, he ſhould never have had: But becauſe it was not, he prayed for it and had it, in a meaſure more then ordinary. To which full meaſure though every own cannot attain; yet ſo far as by all good means he can, he may lawfully ſeek it for the making up of what was loſt in *Adams* fall. For before *Adam* fell, he knew the nature of every thing, inſomuch that he gave names to all the living Creatures; and whatſoever *Adam* called every living Creature, that was the name thereof. But now, Gen. 2. 19

what is Man; or what depth of knowledge is it that he can have, but by great pains and induſtry? His natural knowledge is not great, nor at any time ſo much, but that it may be bettered by acquired ſkill. Seeing then this breach came into the World through *Adams* fall, we may by all good means lawfully ſeek to make it up again; nothing doubting but that by a ſober and diligent ſearch, we may in ſome * meaſure learn what God hath written in the *Works* of his hands, yea even in thoſe things which the Text calls here *The Signs of Heaven*.

* *Multum eſt de rebus cœleſtibus aliquid cognoſcere.*

Diogenes Laertius ſaith, that *Thales Mileſius* was the firſt among the *Grecians* that was called σοφὸς, a Wiſe man, becauſe he was the firſt among them that found out the Secrets and Myſteries of the Heavenly Bodies. And *Pliny* in his Natural Hiſtory reporteth, that *Solon* (who was called the wiſe Law-maker among the *Athenians*) did by the Eclipſes of the Sun and Moon, foretell the defects and ſubverſions of certain States and Kingdoms in *Aſia*. To whom *Melanchthon* (that great Divine, ſo often mentioned) hath fully accorded: For having ſaid that many things may be judged by the Stars, he reckoneth among them, even the Mutations of Common-weals; calling that alſo, a part of the *Phyſicks*.

But how can any thing of this be learned from the Signs of Heaven? Doth not God diſpoſe of Kingdoms and Common-weals? I anſwer, yes, he doth: and it is one thing ſo to diſpoſe of Kingdoms, as to tranſlate them to another Nation; another thing ſo to diſpoſe of them, as they who live in them be puniſhed for their ſins: both which God doth; But how? They who in this ſend us to God and to his Decree, ſay that which

which is primarily true; but they do not shew us how it is secondarily effected. For although concerning some things extraordinary, the cause be hid and doth not appear so much as in a remote way; yet such as be either ordinary, or not altogether extraordinary, are not wrought by the first cause without an administration of the second. But you will say, the changes of Common-weals are altogether and at all times extraordinary; No, not altogether nor at all times: For a previous disposition thereunto may be discerned, and seen many times by the Signs of Heaven; but how far, or to what height their operation herein shall extend, is seldom or never fully known in every particular to any, but by the spirit of Prophecy; and the reason is, because certainly to foretel of contingent events, belongs to none but God himself, *Esa.* 41. 23. And yet for all that, the Signs of Heaven have here also their working, and are serviceable to God, even for such purposes as these, else never would it be written in the Scriptures, That the Stars in their courses fought against *Sisera*, *Judg.* 5. 20. Nor would *David* say, in *Psalm* Fifty, at the fourth Verse, *He shall call to the Heavens from above, and to the Earth, that he may judge his people.* Nor last of all, would it stand upon record in humane story, nor be granted by the consent of all Ages, That great Eclipses and Conjunctions have always had sad events: So that the Scripture speaketh not in vain, when it saith concerning the Sun, Moon, and Stars; *Let them be for Signs, as well as for seasons, days, and years.*

But to give a further touch upon this: There is (I confess) no *Chaldean* fate to be feared, nor any necessity to be imposed upon the * wills of men, but

onely an inclination; and this inclination is not caused by an immediate working of the Stars, on the intellectual part or minde of man, but occasioned rather mediately, or so far forth as the soul depends on the temperaments and material organs of the body; to which it is to indulgent, and yeeldeth to often to the motion thereof; which is no strange thing neither: For if we consider the operation of the soul, so long as it is in the body, it dependeth indeed upon material and corporal organs; whose Elementary matter, whereof they consist, is as subject to the operation of the Heavens, as any other Elementary matter whatsoever: In which regard, it cannot be denied, but that the Heavens in some sort do work upon mens mindes and dispositions. And hereupon it comes to pass, that in places where the present state of things is apt to kindle into a combustion, That there, I say, *Mars* being powerful in operation; doth sometimes sowe the seeds of War by his working upon adust choler; and the like; Or the Air being greatly out of tune by the bad influences of the Planets, causeth not onely many sicknesses, but strange disorders of the minde; and they breaking out into act, do many times disturbe States, translate Kingdoms, or work some unlucky disaster or other. For when the Air is distemperatly heated, then it is for certain, very apt so to disorder and dry up the blood in humane bodies, that thereby great store of red and adust choler may be purchased; and this stirreth up unto anger, with the thought of many furious and violent actions; and so by consequent to War, and from War cometh victory, from victory proceedeth change of Common-weals, and translations many times of Kingdoms, with change of

* That the Stars and other Celestial bodies incline the will by mediation of the sensitive appetite, which is stirred by the constitution and complexion, cannot be doubted; as saith Sir *Walter Ralegh* in his History of the World, *l.* 1. *c.* 1, *s.* 11. *Corpora cœlestia* (saith Damascen) *constituunt in nobis habitus, complexiones, & dispositiones. Ide. ex Damas.*

of Laws and Religion, according to that common saying, *Novus Rex, nova Lex*; New Lords, new Laws.

All which is very plain; and yet there be some so full of scruples, that they do altogether oppose this manifest Doctrine; others so full of self conceit, and epicureous security, that they do wickedly deride it; whom whilest we suffer to play the fools with their fond fancies, frivilous frumps, and affected derisions, we may truly beleeve that they rather want a little Hellebore to cure their Brains, then force of reason by arguments and demonstration to inform their Judgements. Such a one I think (in this) was *Pericles*, that great and famous *Athenian*, who in the beginning of the *Peloponesian* War, being ready with a great Fleet of an hundred and fifty ships to hoyse up sail, was presented (even as he went up into his Gally) with a great and terrible Eclipse of the Sun, which made the skie so dark, that some of the bigger Stars appeared. At which the Governor of the ship was sore affrighted, and thereupon together with the rest of the company, refused to sail; which when *Pericles* perceived (either truly contemning the threatnings of the Stars, or fearing that the hearts of his Soldiers should fail) he put his Cloak for a while before the Governors eyes, and then by and by taking it away again, asked him, If that which he had done with his Cloak portended any thing: To whom the Governor answered, No: No more, saith he, must thou think is signified by this Eclipse, though the Moon be now between the Sun and our sight. Which being said, he commanded that they should hoyse up sail and be gone about their intended expedition. But this of *Pericles* was surely an overbold presumption, as by

See this Story in *Plutarchs* lifes.

the

the event appeared: For the effects of this Eclipſe brought not onely miſery upon his own Country, and diſhonor upon himſelf, but did put even all *Greece* under the ſad calamities of a long laſting War. Which ſtory I have mentioned to ſhew, that they are in as great an error who contemn the Signs of Heaven, as they who are diſmayed at them; or, as they who think it an unlawful and fordidden thing to ſearch into the ſignifications of them. To whom, I ſay, eſpecially to the laſt; Purge away the droſs, and keep the Gold; waſh away the filth, and keep the Cloth; fan out the chaff, and keep the Corn: for it proceedeth either from ignorance, or from an over-nice ſcrupulosity, and no way ſorteth with wiſe and learned men, promiſcuouſly and without difference and diſtinction, to confound lawful and praiſe-worthy knowledge, with that which is impious and Diabolical; as * one in his Hiſtory of the World, hath gallantly obſerved. For though (as I ſaid before) the Devil ſhuffels in many corruptions and ſuperſtitions into lawful Arts, whereby wicked knaves have done abomination; yet are not the Arts therefore to be condemned in the right uſe of them: For (as the ſaid Author ſpeaketh) if we confound Arts with the abuſe of them, we ſhall not onely condemn all honeſt Trades and enterchange among men (for there are that deceive in all profeſſions) but ſhall in a ſhort time obſcure and bury all kinde of good learning whatſoever; and that's juſt as the Devil would have it; For if he could but drown the World in ignorance, he might then work his will, and lead about men which way he pleaſeth.

* Sir Walter Raleigh

Furthermore, it is a thing well worth the noting, that by underſtanding the uttermoſt activity of Natural

tural agents, we are assisted to know the Divinity of Christ; and may thereupon the better confute those Heretiques that deny it, for the terms or limits of natural power and vertue not understood; we may stand in doubt whether those very works which Christ did, may not be done by natural means. But knowing how far nature can go, and finding Christs miracles to be above that, we conclude, that what he wrought was by the Finger of God.

And as for Divination which the Scriptures cry against, Is it that by which a wise man may with probability conjecture of some things to come, before they are; grounding his prediction upon the influences of the Stars, and natural operation of the Heavens, which work upon things below? Surely no, it is not that. For what the Scripture forbiddeth, is certainly of another kinde, by which the Devil taught the Heathen vainly to put confidence in the flying, feeding, chattering, and chirping of Birds; as also in what they saw at their Sacrifices, in the opening and viewing the bowels and livers of Beasts. For it is without question, that the Devil was never ignorant, how that both the wise and simple observe, when the Sea-birds forsake the Shores and fly unto the Land, that then some great storm commonly followeth; that the high flying of the Kite and Swallow, betoken fair weather; that the crying of Crowes and bathing of Ducks foreshew Rain; for they feel the Aire moistned in their Quils. Now hereupon the enemy of Mankind, working upon these as upon the rest of Gods creatures, long time abused the Heathen by teaching them to observe the flying of Fowls, and thereby to judge of good or evil success in the Wars; and (withal) to look into

into the entrails of Beasts for the same; as if God had written the secrets of his Providence in the livers and bowels of those creatures. The prohibition therefore in Scripture, to mark the flying of Fowls (as signs of good or evil success) hath no reference at all to the crying of Crows against Rain, or to any observation not superstitious, and whereof a reason or cause may be given. By which it may be concluded, that there is a kinde of Divination, to which a wise man may attain and seek after, without any offence to God, or harm to Piety and true Religion: For though superstitious and Diabolical Divination be abominable, and not to be tolerated among Christians, yet that which is natural, is granted lawful, so long as it keeps within it's own bounds. *Divinum* [*scilicet genus Divinationis*] *non est impium, nec prohibitum: Diabolicum & superstitiosum impium est, & vetitum: Naturale vero, si suas metas servet, concessum est*; as saith *Goclenius* in the end of the fifteenth Chapter of his Physical Disputations; that whole Chapter treating of Divination and the kinds thereof.

The like may be said concerning the observing of times; for which some men, in the height of their zeal, do also much blame Astrology, but cannot truly do it as it is pure and unabused; For pure Astrology and undefiled, will observe no such times as may bring any dishonor unto God, and yet it may observe times too. For (as *Solomon* speaketh in *Ecclesiastes*) *there is a time for every thing, and a season for every purpose under Heaven*; which prudentially observed, and not superstitiously sought after and doted on, may conduce much to the benefit of Mankinde. This I grant: But is it therefore probable that every day in the week

Eccles. 3. 1, 2.

hath

hath a ſeveral Planet to govern it, or is there any reaſon for it, ſeeing the Stars were all made upon one and the ſame day? no more I think then to aſſign a ſeveral Planet to every hour (called by the name of Planetary hours) which in my judgement is no better then folly and ſuperſtition: and therefore in this reſpect to make choice of good or bad days, or of lucky and unlucky hours, deſerves to be exploded, and not to be harbored under the harmleſs ſhelter of Aſtrology. There be times indeed when the Planets according to their aſpects, motions, or places in the Heavens, are either more or leſs powerful in their operations: To obſerve therefore ſuch times, and apply them onely to ſuch things as are agreeable to their natural working, is no ſuperſtition, but a well grounded obſervation; grounded upon a natural cauſe, to bottom and uphold it. If the Heathen (whoſe ways we are not to learn) had obſerved times no otherwiſe, I beleeve (for that) they never had been caſt out, nor the *Jews* forbidden to obſerve times as they did. For even afterward, *the Children of Iſſachar are ſpoken of as men of eminency, in regard that they had underſtanding of the times, to know what Iſrael ought to do:* As it is in the firſt Book of the *Chronicles*, the 12. Chapter, at the 32. Verſe. If therefore the Hebrew word *Menonen* (or *Megnonen*) in *Deut.* 18. 10. be to be rendred, *An obſerver of times*, it is to be underſtood of ſuch an obſerver of times, as makes his Elections by Witchcraft and Southſaying, or by ſome ſuch like Devilliſh practiſe, and not by that which truly and indeed is called Aſtrology. For that which truly and indeed is called ſo, is nothing elſe but ἄστρων λόγος, the language of the Stars, or the ſpeech of the Heavens: whoſe voice (as I ſhewed you before, out of

the 19. *Pſalm*, at the 3. Verſe) is heard over all the Earth: *For there is neither ſpeech nor language, but their voice is heard among them.* The Apoſtle *Paul*, in *Rom.* 10. 18. doth onely allude hereunto, and not litterally underſtand it of the Preaching of the Goſpel, as ſome would have it; *For as the voice of the Heavens is heard in all Lands, ſo the ſound of the Word which was Preached by the Apoſtles went into all the Earth, and their words unto the ends of the World.* Thus then I ſee, as Dogs bark at them they know not, ſo ſome among men condemn and hate the things they throughly underſtand not.

Moreover, another way of the Heathen was, to inchant the Signs of Heaven; as both their Poets, and others report. *Carmina vel cœlo poſſunt deducere Lunam*, ſaith one: *Charms* can bring down the very Moon out of Heaven. And ſo alſo doth *Diodorus Siculus* teſtifie, *Lib.* 2. *c.* 8. Upon which power the Heathen people did ſo much rely, that as *Jannes* and *Jambres* withſtood *Moſes* in *Pharaoh's* time, ſo did the *Chaldeans* withſtand Gods Prophets in *Eſay's* time, and afterward; inſomuch, that they repoſed their ſafety, and the ſafety alſo of their Empire, in the power of this wicked Inchanting brood of Aſtrologers; who were either ſuch themſelves as had through *Satans* ſubtilty cortupted the art with damned Diabolocal inventions, and not ſuch as medled with no more then pure Aſtrology; or elſe were mixed as one in counſel and purpoſe, with thoſe who wickedly believed, that they could croſs God, and hinder the operation of the Heavens by their deviliſh inchantments. Now theſe the Lord God Almighty derided, in *Eſa.* 47. 12, 13, & 14. Verſes: ſaying, *Stand now with thy inchantments, and with the multitude of thy Sorceries, wherein thou haſt labored*

bored from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels: Let now the veiwers of the Heavens, the lookers on the Stars, who give knowledge concerning the months, stand up and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them, they shall not deliver themselves. By which words [of, If so be thou mayest prevail---let them stand up and save thee---they shall not deliver themselves] is clearly shewed that *Chaldea* relied solely upon the power of these wicked men, who opposed God, and gave no heed at all to the predictions of his Prophets. *Of which opinion was Balak, the King of Moab, when he sent for Balaam, desiring that by his inchantments he would curse Gods people: saying unto him with great confidence, I wote well that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou curseſt is cursed*, Numb. 22. 6. *But all this would not serve the turn; for there is no inchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel. And therefore when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not as at other times to seek for inchantments, but set his face toward the Wilderness*, Numb. 24. 1.

And thus I believe we have the right meaning of that Text even now alleaged out of the Prophecy of the Prophet *Esay*. Or suppose this be not the full meaning, but that rather we are to understand it of Gods deriding the *Chaldean* Astrologers, for not foreseeing by the Heavens what his Prophets foretold; yet what can be thence concluded, but that the highest God doth sometimes, when he pleaseth, produce that which could not be foretold by the observation of the Stars. This I grant is not altogether improbable, howbeit, I

rather think the other to be the trueſt interpretation, as beſt agreeing to the ſcope of the Prophecy.

What ſhall I ſay more? the Text ſaith here, *Be not afraid of the Signs of Heaven:* and ſo ſay I, Be neither too fearful of them, nor yet to careleſs to regard them, nor the ſignifications intended by them. For though they be Signs, and do therefore ſignifie; yet let not this trouble you; be not overcome with fear; be not diſmayed at them. For if thou belongeſt to the *Iſrael* of God, and wilt but ſearch and try the ways, repent of ſin, watch and pray, ſeek to God, and redeem the time now the days are evil; then know, that there is a God, who is the God of *Iſrael*, who will be for thee; and will either remove a threatned evil, and leave a bleſſing behinde him, or will elſe diſpoſe of the worſt, that either may or can be, for thy aſſured good. For as *David* ſaith in the 121. *Pſalm*, *He that keepeth Iſrael ſhall neither ſlumber nor ſleep.* The Lord himſelf is thy keeper; the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand. So that the Sun ſhall not ſmite thee by day (for ſo the word ſignifieth) nor the Moon by night. The Lord ſhall preſerve thee from all evil: yea, it is even he that ſhall keep thy ſoul. The Lord ſhall preſerve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore.

All glory therefore be to God, both Father, Son, and holy Spirit: As was in the beginning, is now, and ever ſhall be, world without end. Amen Amen.

FINIS.